

# The Punta Gorda Herald

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## A LOP HORNED COW

By M. QUAD

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Ask any farmer you will and he will tell you that a lop horned cow is a trouble maker. When she has a bobbed tail to boot then you look out. You couldn't give her away to any one knowing cow character. She will jump any fence to eat her fill of corn and then seek to destroy what she can't eat.

There had been peace in Woods county for a dozen years when a rumpus suddenly fell upon the land and changed the course of at least two lives and gave a hundred others something besides crops to talk about.

Farmer Jepson, widower, lived four miles from Ackron on the county line road, and Jane Schonfeld, widow and farmer, lived three miles west of him on the Red Bridge road. They had lived thus for five years and only knew each other by name. The five years might have become twenty had not an old lop horned cow stepped in to give the parties an introduction.

The cow was owned by the widow. Besides being lop horned she was bobtailed, wild eyed and had various bad habits, one of which was jumping six rail fences and wandering about nights. These promenades sometimes led her miles away and into strange pastures. The first time Farmer Jepson saw her she was in the midst of his cornfield and had cleared about half an acre of the juicy stalks. He was a good man, but he swore at her and called her names. He also tried his best to kill her on the spot. A week later the cow called again to see how the corn was coming on, and after half killing her the farmer sent word that "if that old critter of a cow steps hoof on my land again there'll be a lawsuit to make things rumble!"

The cow didn't hurry matters any. She waited until Mr. Jepson had transplanted his cabbage plants and they had got fairly growing, and then she called one night and helped herself to 250 of them. The first the widow knew of the midnight raid was when she received a summons from a justice of the peace. Suit had been commenced by Farmer Jepson to recover \$250 damages.

"So he's sued me, has he?" observed the widow as she doubled up her fists and fire came to her eyes. "Well, we'll see who comes out ahead."

After two or three adjournments the case came to trial, and it was in the courtroom that plaintiff and defendant first saw each other. Both were surprised, and both said something to themselves. What the farmer said was:

"Well, by thunder! I expected to see a fat and homely old two fisted widder, and I find her a good lookin' little bit of a female who ought to be sittin' on a husband's knee. Wish I'd seen her before I begun this suit. The blame old cow damaged me, but I ain't goin' to swear very hard agin no woman like that."

"Lands o' messy, but he ain't no mean man!" exclaimed the widow after a look at the farmer. "Why, they said he was a big boss and bluffer and wanted to bulldoze me 'cause I'm all alone in the world. Say, now, but they are all wrong. He ain't the kind to bluff and pitch in. Wish he had come to see me about the old cow. If he had I'd have chained her up. Wonder how hard he'll swear agin me?"

She was soon to know. The plaintiff's lawyer in opening the case said it was an aggravated case of trespass and damage and that the \$250 mentioned wasn't really half what they should have sued for. Then he went on to tell of what a defiant woman the defendant was and wound up by stating his hopes that the jury would render a verdict without leaving the box. Then the plaintiff was called to the witness chair, and, to the surprise of the widow and the disgust of his lawyer, he said he had forgotten the message the woman returned to him. He followed that up by declaring that his feelings had simply been shocked and that he had fully recovered from the shock in a minute and a half. As to the corn and cabbage, perhaps \$10 would pay the bill. If a verdict for that amount was rendered he would take it on the installment plan at a dollar a month. He had once owned a lop horned, bobtailed cow, and he knew how hard it was to keep them at home o' nights.

"You jackass, but you have lost your case!" hissed his lawyer as the witness stepped down with a smile in the direction of the widow, whose lawyer was whispering to her:

"Now you get up there and give us some hot talk and your case is won. We've got Jepson on the skedaddle."

There was no hot talk from the wid-

ow. On the contrary, she cooed like a dove. She admitted to the ownership of the jumping, predatory cow, but was quite willing to pay reasonable damages. She didn't doubt the plaintiff's shocked feelings and was sorry for them and wished he had hit the old cow with the ax. One of the results of the suit was a verdict for 6 cents' damages, and another was that Farmer Jepson would call at her home for the money. He kept his word. A week later he drove up to the door and after an hour's interview was asked to call again. Three months later his disgusted lawyer was heard to exclaim:

"Prettiest case I ever had and dead sure of a verdict, and Jepson knocks it all in the head by falling in love with the defendant! Yes, they were married yesterday."

## COMPANY AT BREAKFAST.

A Surprise Party That Startled a Bride in India.

"I was married in India," says a writer in the Contra Costa Gazette. "and rented a little house fourteen miles or so from any other habitation of white men. The morning my wife and I arrived the servants laid breakfast on the veranda overlooking the river. At the clatter of the plates there began to come down from the big tree that overshadowed the house and up the tree that grew in the ravine behind it, from the house roof itself, from everywhere, a multitude of solemn monkeys."

"They came up singly and in couples and in families and took their places without noise or fuss on the veranda and sat there like an audience waiting for an entertainment to begin. And when the breakfast was all laid and the monkeys were all seated I went in to call my wife."

"Breakfast is ready, and they are all waiting," I said.

"Who are waiting?" she asked in dismay. "I thought we were going to be alone, and I was just coming out in my dressing gown."

"Never mind," I said. "The people about here are not fashionably dressed. They wear pretty much the same things all the year round."

"And so my wife came out. Imagine her astonishment. In the middle of the veranda stood our breakfast table, and all the rest of the space, as well as the railings and the steps, was covered with an immense company of monkeys, as grave as possible and as motionless and silent as if they were stuffed. Only their eyes kept blinking and their little round ears kept twitching. My wife laughed heartily—at which the monkeys only looked all the graver—and sat down."

"Will they eat anything?" she asked.

"Try them," I said.

"So she picked up a biscuit and threw it among the company. Three hundred monkeys jumped into the air like one, and for an instant there was a riot that defies description. The next moment every monkey was sitting in its place as solemn as if it had never moved. Only their eyes winked and their ears twitched."

"My wife threw them another biscuit, and the riot broke out again. Then she threw them another and another and another. But at last we had given away all that we had to give and got up to go. The monkeys at once rose and, advancing gravely to the steps, walked down them in a solemn procession and dispersed for the day's occupations."

## A Study In Punctuation.

A celebrated eastern educator comma who has spent much time in studying literature comma tells us that the modern writer uses too many punctuation marks semicolon that he often gets them in the wrong place and that they are a nuisance comma anyhow period

Another shark on literature comma however comma says that it is impossible for any person to write without using punctuation marks period Being of a genteel turn comma we do not feel like coming right out and calling the latter gentleman a quotation marks liar comma quotation marks but we have demonstrated comma to the satisfaction of ourself comma at least comma that writing can be done without the use of any punctuation mark whatsoever period How do you like it interrogation point—Brooklyn Eagle.

## Swinburne Used Profanity Often.

Swinburne would have suffered badly if the thirty shilling swearing tax had been enforced against him. He lived at the British hotel in Cockspur street and never went anywhere except in hansoms, which, whatever the distance, he invariably remunerated with a shilling. When he drove two miles beyond the radius there was the devil's own row. But in the matter of imprecation the poet was more than a match for a caddy, who after five minutes of it would drive off as though he had been rated by Beelzebub himself. —London Chronicle.

## Cordial.

Mrs. Jenkins—Mrs. Smith, we shall be neighbors now. I have bought a house next you with a water frontage. Mrs. Smith—So glad! I hope you will drop in some time.—Everybody's.

# SAVING THE SCENE

An Emergency For Which Actors Must Ever Be Prepared.

ACTS NOT ON THE PLAYBILLS.

Presence of Mind by Which Clara Morris Turned to Advantage a Canine Interruption in "Miss Multon" and a Feline Intrusion in "Camille."

An experienced actor is supposed to be able to cope with any stage emergency, no matter what is lacking or what happens. Cool, self possessed, it is expected of him to turn the ridiculous into a source of applause rather than of disapproval or laughter.

And among the necessary acquirements for the actress is an unshakable self control, no matter if by some carelessness she is thrown into a situation almost without precedent. She must never fly at a tangent because of some unrehearsed incident. She must not scream when the perennial gallery idiot yells "Fire!" If something is forgotten she must try hard to hide its absence or invent a substitute.

If anything unusual occurred I always tried to incorporate it into the play if possible, as when in the school-room scene of "Miss Multon" I was astonished to see a large water spaniel come trotting on to the stage, waving his tail at me as if we had been bosom friends for years. I don't like to recall all the things I thought about that dog for a moment or two.

Then I rose, and, thanking heaven and a generous master for the collar he wore, I grasped it, and, having stroked his silky ear with the other hand, I said to my pupils: "Children, I do not wish to curtail your pleasures, but I have told you before that I cannot permit you to have your pets in this room during lesson hours. Now, don't force me to remind you of that again."

And the little girl who played Paul quickly and cleverly responded to my wink. "Oh, excuse us this time, Miss Multon, and we won't do it again." And, taking the dog from me, she led him off into the retirement of private life, while in the morning one newspaper remarked that "among the prettiest of the lighter touches of the performance was the scene at the Christmas tree in the first act and the dog scene in the third act."

Another time, in Baltimore, when I was playing "Camille," I had a similar experience. In the fifth act I had staggered from the window to the bureau, nearing that dread moment when I was to see the reflection of my wrecked and ruined self in the looking glass. The house was all attention, watching dimly the piteous, weak movements of the dying woman. Just then I heard the quick indrawing of the breath that startled womanhood always indulges in before either a scream or a laugh.

My heart gave a plunge. "What is it? Oh, what is wrong?" And I glanced down at myself anxiously, for really I wore very little in that scene. "What is it?"

Then came a titter, and evidently it was growing. In agony I turned quickly about and found myself facing a monstrous cat. Starlike, he held the very center of the stage, his two great topaz eyes fixed unflinchingly upon my face. His tail stood straight and aggressively in the air, twitching with short twitches at the very top.

Alas, no wonder they giggled! But how to save the approaching death scene was what went through my mind.

Clinging to the bureau, I slipped to my knees, and with an earnest prayer that he would not resist my appeal in a faint voice I called him to me. Thomas looked suspiciously at me, hesitated, then approached gingerly and sniffed at my fingers. Then he rubbed his dingy body against my knee, and in an instant my arms were about him, my cheek on his wicked old head. What a sigh of relief went like a wave over that audience! I had won!

I then called Nanine to relieve me, and the applause that swept the house was as balm to my great distress. I said to Nanine, "Take him downstairs; he grows too heavy for me to pet." And Sir Thomas was carried off reluctantly, imagining perhaps that I was envious of the hit he had made.

My manager, who was somewhat of a wag, of course made the most of the saved situation. A gentleman met him on the street the next morning and was anxious for him to settle an argument between himself and wife.

"My wife, who has seen the play several times in New York, insists that the beautiful little scene with the cat belongs to the play, while I don't recall it, nor do any of our acquaintances whom I have asked this morning. Won't you kindly set us right?"

"Willingly," replied my manager. "Your wife is in the right, my dear sir. That cat scene is always done. It is a great favorite with Miss Morris, and she hauls that cat all over the country with her."

May heaven forgive him!—Clara Morris.

## A BULL RING BEGGAR.

The Intruder Wanted Bread, but He Got "Thumbs Down."

Sometimes the bullfight in Spain is used to compel the attention of the authorities to grievances that would otherwise go unnoticed, as is seen in the following incident described by Harry A. Franck in "Four Months Afoot in Spain."

"The newcomer will long remember his first bull—certainly if, as in my own case, the first banderillero slips at the moment of thrusting his barbed darts and is booted like a soccer football half around the ring by the snorting animal. Still less shall I forget the chill that shot through me when, with the fifth bull at the height of his fury, a gaunt and awkward boy of fifteen sprang suddenly over the barriers and shook his ragged blouse a dozen times in the animal's face. As many times he escaped a goring by the closest margin."

"The toreros did not for a moment lose their heads. Calmly and dexterously they maneuvered until one of them drew the bull off, when another caught the intruder by the arm and marched him across the ring to the shade of the mayor's box. There the youth, who had taken this means of gaining an audience, lifted up a mournful voice and asked for food, asserting that he was starving—a statement that seemed by no means improbable. The response was thumbs down. But he gained his point, in a way, for he was given a fortnight in prison."

"Incidents of the sort had grown so frequent of late in Seville as to make necessary a new law, promulgated in large letters on that day's program. Printed words in all probability meant nothing to this neglected son of Seville."

## The Uncertain Apple Tree.

An apple tree is the result of a graft from the tree that is known to be a producer of a certain kind and flavor of apples. If the seed were planted and one relied on it to produce a select grade of fruit the result would be disappointing, for the reason that from the seed the most remarkable varieties will be shown. Perhaps they will be miserable little crabapples or misshapen, bitter fruit or a useless conglomeration. The seed somehow or other harks back to its origin, notwithstanding years of cultivation. The varieties of apples known today are a result of careful selection and constant grafting of the better kind from year to year until the present development has been attained.—Harper's.

Mean,  
Husband—My, but I wish I had your tongue! Wife—So that you could express yourself intelligently? Husband—No; so that I could stop it when I wanted to.—Detroit Free Press.

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